



UN-HABITAT

Induction Seminar for Member States

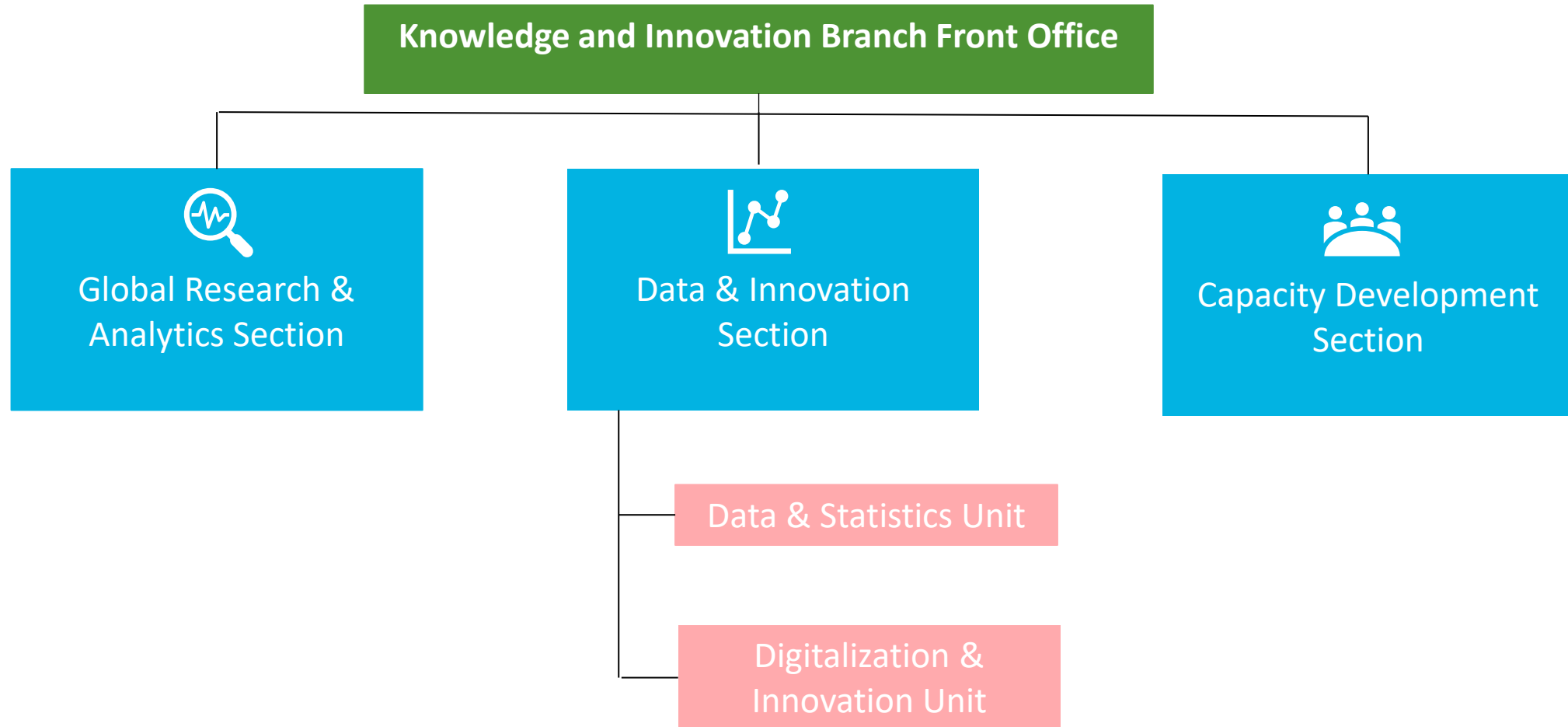
Agenda item 8: Introduction of Global Knowledge and Advocacy Division

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(Name)
(Title), (Division)

14 September 2026

The Knowledge and Innovation Branch



Custodian of the **Strategic Plan's Means of Implementation 3**: Knowledge, Data, Digitalisation and Capacity Development.

Global Research and Analytics : Mandate & Outcome



Mandate

- Produce a **Global report on human Settlements** (*General Assembly resolution 34/114 & Governing Council of UN-Habitat resolution 17/80*).
- Report on the **progress of the implementation of the New Urban Agenda** every four years (*Economic and Social Council resolution 2017/24; General Assembly resolution 71/235, New Urban Agenda: para 166-167;175*).

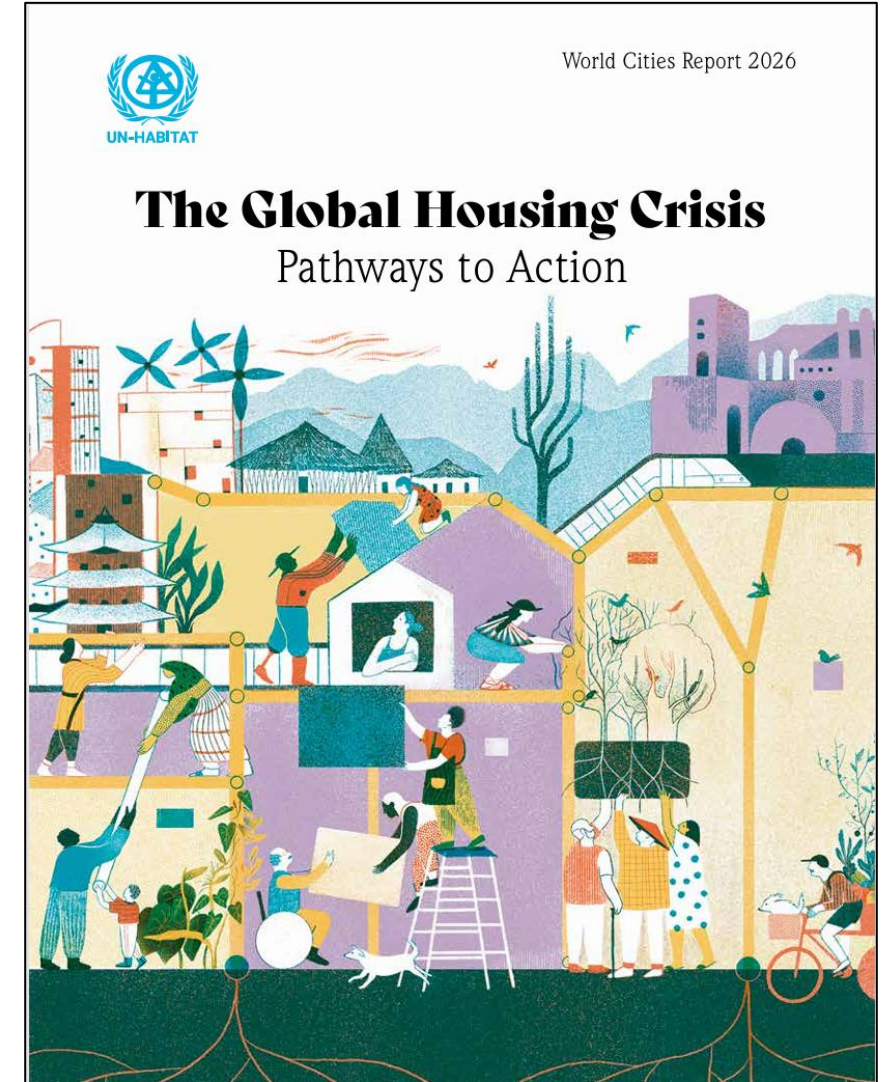


Expected Outcome

Produce **authoritative and globally representative research and analytics on urban issues** to inform national, regional and local governments, as well as other stakeholders, on policy decisions and practical guidance related to housing and sustainable urbanization.

Global Research and Analytics : Key Initiatives

- **World Cities Report:**
 - Edition [2026](#): The Global Housing Crisis
 - Edition [2024](#): Cities and Climate Action
 - Edition [2022](#): Envisaging the Future of Cities
- **New Urban Agenda:** Secretary General's [quadrennial reports](#) on NUA
 - 2026 SG report
 - 2022 SG report
 - 2018 SG report



Data and Statistics: Mandate & Outcome



Mandates

- Coordinate the **global programme on human settlements statistics** and strengthen statistical capacity of Member States (*UN STATCOM 50/118, 2019*).
- Develop **methodologies for monitoring cities and human settlements**, including the national sample of cities and identification of slum & non-slum areas (*UN STATCOM 50/118, 2019*).
- Apply the harmonized **Degree of Urbanization (DEGURBA)** methodology to define cities, urban and rural areas for international statistical comparison (*UN STATCOM 51/112, 2020*).
- Develop **technical assistance programmes and tools** for human settlements statistics capacities and data consistency across national, regional and city levels (*UN STATCOM 53/117, 2022; HSP/HA.2/Res.6, 2023*).
- Support **monitoring and reporting on the urban dimensions** of 2030 Agenda & NUA through the Global Urban Monitoring Framework (UMF), including SDG 11 indicators (*UN STATCOM 50/118, 2019 and 53/117, 2022*).



Expected Outcome

Produce **authoritative, harmonized and globally comparable urban data, standards and monitoring frameworks** to track progress on urban dimensions of **SDGs (11, 6, 1), NUA, housing and sustainable urbanization**, including strengthening Member State and city statistical capacities, and inform evidence-based policy and decision-making at global, regional, national and local levels.

Data and Statistics: Key Initiatives

- **Global urban statistics** : SDG11 and NUA reporting, regional/global aggregates, Human Settlements Statistics Reports.
- **International urban statistical standards**: UMF, DEGURBA and slums & informal settlements methodologies.
- **Global urban databases**: statistical, geospatial, Earth observation, administrative and community-generated data.
- **Member States capacity** : technical assistance to NSOs and urban observatories.
- **UN-system statistical coordination**: UNSC, IAEG-SDGs and UN-GGIM, UN System-wide Strategy on Sustainable Urbanization, UN data commons.
- **Global data partnerships**: Global Urban Data Coalition, Quality of Life Programme.



Digitalization and Innovation: Mandate & Outcome



Mandate

- Promote a **people-centred approach to smart cities** and support national and local governments in **leveraging innovation and digital technologies** to achieve sustainable urban development, the NUA and the SDGs. *(HSP/HA.2/Res.1, 2023)*
- Support NUA implementation through the **responsible application of digital technologies, innovation, data and knowledge** to improve urban governance, planning, service delivery, inclusion, resilience and sustainability.



Expected Outcome

Strengthened **government capacity and enabling ecosystems for people-centred digital transformation**, resulting in more inclusive, innovative, resilient and sustainable cities and human settlements.

Digitalization and Innovation: Key Initiatives

- **Knowledge products:**
 - [People-Centred Smart Cities strategy development guide](#) (2025)
 - Global toolkit on people-centred smart cities (forthcoming, 2026)
 - [GeoAI](#) toolkit, [World Smart Cities Outlook](#), [Global assessment of responsible AI in cities](#)
- **United Nations Innovation Technology Accelerator for Cities (UNITAC):** UN-Habitat's digital innovation facility
- [Digital tools](#) (e.g. BEAM, URPS, AОВI, Digital Job Card)
- National and local **smart city strategies** (Windhoek, 2026)
- **Capacity development** (over 3,000+ trainees across 4 countries)
- **Climate-smart cities** programme and innovation partnerships
- Challenge-driven [innovation methodology](#) for cities



Capacity Development: Mandate & Outcome



Mandate

- Provide capacity development and tools to national, subnational and local governments in **designing, planning and managing sustainable urban development** (*GA Res. 71/256, 2016*)
- Enhance **capacity-building for the implementation of the NUA and the urban dimension** of the 2030 Agenda (*HSP/HA.1/Res.1, 2019*)



Expected Outcome

Strengthened **institutional and technical capacities of national and local governments** to implement the New Urban Agenda and advance sustainable urbanization, through enhanced knowledge, skills, innovation, and implementation support, enabling evidence-based and effective urban policy and action.

Capacity Development: Key Initiatives

- **Training program**, competency frameworks, online courses
- [The Housing Primer](#)
- **Global Urban Dialogue series**
- **Centres of Excellence**
- **WUF Academy**
- **UN-Habitat Fellowship Programme**
- **Capacity partnerships:**
 - Habitat UNI
 - Singapore Centre for Liveable Cities
 - Shelter Academy Programme (Arcadis)
 - International Urban Training Center



Knowledge and Innovation Branch: Cross-cutting Initiatives



New Urban Agenda:

- Revamped [NUA Platform](#)
- NUA reporting [guidelines](#)
- Knowledge exchange and capacity development initiatives



Housing Knowledge Platform ([HSPHA.2/Res.7](#)) : A global repository of housing resources to guide Member States and stakeholders in achieving adequate housing for all.



Practice-based knowledge:

- Curation, analysis, dissemination of proven housing and urban practices.
- Global Award for Sustainable Development in Cities (Shanghai Award) & Baku Urban Award

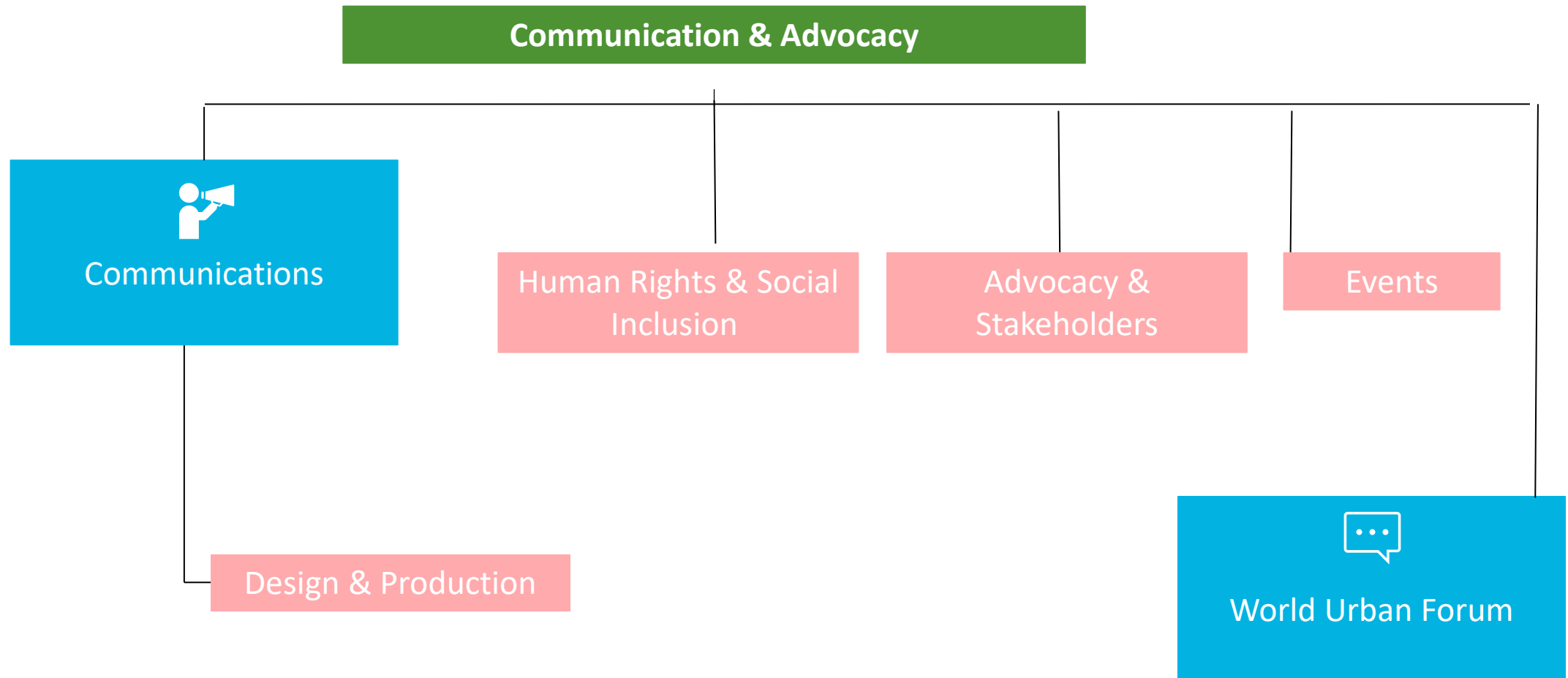


AI for Knowledge Hub: an AI-powered analytical tool connecting urban knowledge and generating insights for evidence-based policy and action – recognised by UN Global Pulse.



UN 2.0: guide UN-Habitat's deployment of the Quintet of Change (Data, Digital, Innovation, Strategic Foresight, Behavioral Science)

The Communication and Advocacy Branch



Custodian of the **Strategic Plan's Means of Implementation 4**: Partnerships, coalitions, advocacy and communication.

Communications: Mandate & Outcome



Mandate

- Raise awareness on sustainable urban development (communications is embedded within the programmatic resolutions that ratify its Strategic Plan (2020-2025 and 2026-2029)).
- Ensuring widest dissemination and communication of UN-Habitat's mandate, notably of normative products, urban solutions on the ground and implementation of the New Urban Agenda and SDG 11 targets.
- Manage UN-Habitat's brand and identity.



Expected Outcome

Position UN-Habitat as a leader on urbanization and housing issues, **expand the agency's outreach and engagement** via key flagship events (Urban October, World Habitat Day, World Cities Day, World Urban Forum) and **promote its key reports and publications.**

Communications: Key Initiatives

Online, social and media coverage:

- 5+ million visits to the website: over 100% annual increase
- Nearly 1 million social media followers: 20% annual increase
- Over 36 media interviews

Reports: Annual Report 2025, Urban October Report 2025

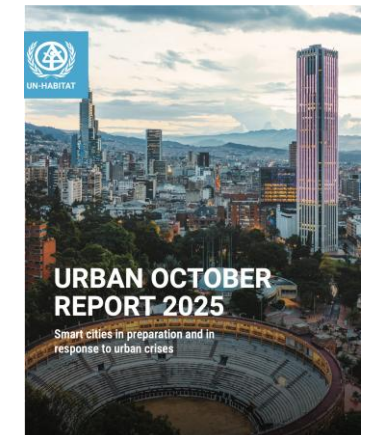
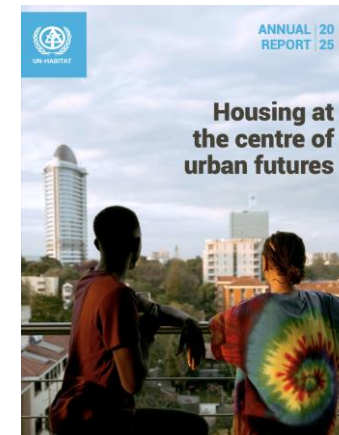
Events: Zero Waste Day, World Cleanup Day, World Urban Forum, World Habitat Day and World Cities Day

Urban October: **579 events** in **242 cities** and **58 countries**

#UrbanOctober 38 million people reached via hashtag

Brand and identity:

- Global communications network established; **CHAT** internal platform for communications planning and guidance
- Strategic communications framework and corporate messages for the Strategic Plan 2026-2029 developed
- Human-focused stories on UN-Habitat's work and impact



Human Rights and Social Inclusion: Mandate & Outcome



Mandate

- **Contribute to achieving gender equality** through the work of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme to support inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable cities and human settlements (Resolution 1/4 2019) & **promoting urban safety** through the implementation of the United Nations System-Wide Guidelines on Safer Cities and Human Settlements (Resolutions 1/2 2019)
- **Support the promotion of universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all** without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion. (UN Charter, Article 55)
- **Support the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)** and its Optional Protocol (A/RES/61/106)

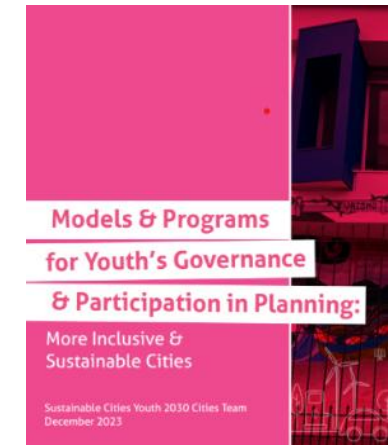
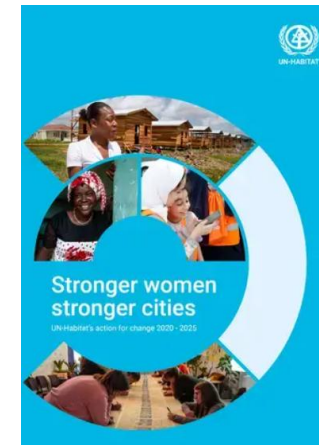


Expected Outcome

The HRSI Unit ensures that human rights, gender equality and social inclusion are mainstreamed across UN-Habitat's policies, research and projects, in order to promote sustainable urban development that is people-centred, age- and gender-responsive, ends all forms of discrimination and violence, and empowers all individuals and communities while enabling their full and meaningful participation. (See paragraph 26, New Urban Agenda)

Human Rights and Social Inclusion: Key Initiatives

- **Advocacy and awareness-raising:** Engagement at, for example, the Commission on the Status of Women, the Human Rights Council, the ECOSOC Youth Forum and the Conference of States Parties to the CRPD
- **Research and knowledge production:** Key publications, for example: [Stronger Women, Stronger Cities](#) & [Models and Programs for Youth Governance, Participation and Planning](#); planned: Human rights-based urban planning
- **Partner coordination, especially around World Urban Forum:** The UN-Habitat Youth Advisory Board (YAB), Advisory Group on Gender Issues (AGGI), Women's and Children and Youth Assemblies, Roundtables on the Rights of Older Persons, Persons with Disabilities, Children and Youth and Indigenous Peoples. WUF Pavilions: Children & Youth, Accessibility 2030 & Urban Safety
- **Internal and external capacity development:** Human Rights and Social Inclusion Community of Practice; Expert Group Meeting series
- **Institutional accountability and mainstreaming:** Gender Equality Marker, Project Review Committee, Systemwide reporting on youth, gender equality and disability inclusion (UN Youth 2030 Strategy; UN-SWAP & UNDIS) Planned: Disability Inclusion Marker
- **Project management:** Management and co-management of select projects, such as women and homelessness and co-designing liveable cities with young people



Advocacy and Stakeholders: Mandate & Outcome



Mandate

- **Champion and advance implementation of the NUA and 2030 Agenda** and support its follow-up, review and acceleration at all levels. *(A/RES/71/256; A/RES/73/239; A/RES/79/214)*
- **Ensure the active and inclusive engagement of local authorities and other stakeholders** in UN-Habitat governance, intergovernmental processes and implementation. *(A/RES/73/239; HSP/HA.1/Res.3)*
- **Leverage WUF and other global platforms** to advance advocacy, knowledge exchange and collective action. *(A/RES/73/239)*
- **Strengthen partnerships and means of implementation**, including finance, capacity-building, technology and mutually beneficial partnerships, to advance sustainable urbanisation. *(A/RES/73/239)*



Expected Outcome

Strong **advocacy, strategic influence, and partnership-building** functions drive collective action and commitment that **accelerate the implementation** of the UN-Habitat Strategic Plan and the New Urban Agenda, while advancing the development, scaling, and application of **context-specific, measurable solutions** for housing, land, and basic services.

Advocacy and Stakeholders: Key Initiatives

- **World Urban Forum (WUF):** *Global convening, stakeholder-led assemblies and roundtables and a WUF outcome document and programme informed by stakeholders*
- **Global Stakeholder Forum (GSF):** *Collective stakeholder voice conveyed to the governing bodies through joint declarations and submissions*
- **Global Stakeholder Dialogue Series:** *Strategic dialogue with stakeholders on emerging priorities and Strategic Plan implementation*
- **Major Stakeholder Groups:** *Structured stakeholder constituencies providing collective inputs to UN-Habitat governance processes*
- **Implementation & Partnership Dialogues/Labs:** *Practice-based exchange, recommendations and partnerships for implementation*
- **Urban Thinkers Campus (UTC):** *A Multi-stakeholder advocacy platform for dialogue, knowledge exchange and actionable recommendations, with outcomes feeding into WUF discussions.*
- **National Urban Campaigns:** *Country-level advocacy and stakeholder mobilisation on national urban priorities, connecting local action to the UN-Habitat global agenda and convenings.*



Events: Mandate & Outcome



Mandate

- **World Urban Forum** resolutions: HSP/GC/18/5, February 2001, paragraph 10, establishing the Urban Forum; and A/RES/56/205, December 2001, paragraph 7 encouraging local authorities and other Habitat Agenda partners to participate – celebrated biannually.
- **World Habitat Day**, A/RES/40/202, December 1985 – observed annually on the first Monday of each October.
- **World Cities Day**, A/RES/68/239, December 2013 – observed annually on 31 October.
- **UN-Habitat Scroll of Honour awards**, HSP/GC/22/6, April 2009 reaffirming the award.
- **World Cleanup Day**, A/RES/78/122, December 2023, observed annually on 20 September.
- **Other legislative meetings such as:** United Nations Habitat Assemblies, Executive Boards, OECPR and OEWG-H.
- **Other non-legislative meetings** such as: Innovate4Cities, GWOPA Assemblies, Urban Thinkers Campus, Intersessional OEWG-H, etc.



Expected Outcome

UN-Habitat convened events, serve as essential platforms to enhance global awareness of it's mandate and mission on advancing adequate housing for all, with increased visibility and fostering stronger partnerships.

Events: Key Deliverables

UN-Habitat Events Team and use of digital Global Events Management Tool – GEMS:

- **Evidence-Based Decision Making** to measure participation and engagement insights.
- **Stronger Partnerships** to easily connect with cities, development partners and other Stakeholders
- **Greater Visibility** to showcase national urban initiatives globally.
- **One-stop tool** for registration, event application and participation
- **Accreditation process** simplified
- **Positive attendance experience** providing a seamless framework for thematic discussions between Stakeholders

Overview of attendance at WUF13



World Urban Forum: Mandate & Outcome



Mandate

- Established by the United Nations General Assembly resolution **56/206 of 21 December 2001**, and in particular **paragraph 3 of section B**, as a **non-legislative technical platform**.
- Aims to **facilitate expert discussions** during years when the Governing Council of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) does not meet.



Expected Outcome

WUF recognized as the premier global **gathering on sustainable urbanization and adequate housing**, and as a **platform for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda**.

World Urban Forum: Key Initiatives

- **Convening and engagement**
 - Ministerial and high-level dialogues
 - Assemblies, roundtables and partner-led events
 - Global and regional mobilization
 - Urban Expo and networking platforms
 - Stakeholder consultations
- **Outcomes and knowledge products**
 - **Call to Action:** stakeholder priorities and commitments
 - **WUF Report:** comprehensive record of discussions, outcomes and evidence
 - **WUF Perspectives:** analysis and reflections supporting policy and practice
- **Implementation and legacy initiatives**
 - **WUF Academy:** capacity development and continuing learning
 - **Practices Hub:** tested approaches, peer exchange and communities of practice
 - **Business & Innovation Hub:** engagement with businesses, innovators and finance partners
 - Continued stakeholder engagement
 - Dissemination and use of WUF outcomes in implementing the New Urban Agenda and UN-Habitat's Strategic Plan



Thank you!



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